

October 20, 1999

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Honorable Bill Richardson, Secretary  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Richardson,

1 [As you progress in making the final decision about Yucca Mountain based on this EIS, I want to reiterate that the U. S. Government, through the DOE, has a legal obligation to build and operate a central repository for spent fuel from commercial reactors and for the high level waste generated from the production of our nuclear weapons. This process has taken exceedingly too long.]

We, in the business community of Augusta, fully support the Savannah River Site in its quest for new missions related to the disposal of surplus plutonium from the nuclear weapons. We recognize that this is an important step in reducing the risk of proliferation and because of the historical safety record and experience at SRS, it is in the best interest of the citizens of our nation to put these facilities there. Our support is also based on the understanding that the high level waste canisters from DWPF and the canisters containing the immobilized plutonium, will be sent to the national repository in the future.

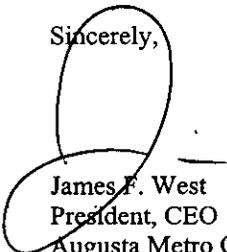
Plant Vogtle is approximately 30 miles from our city so we have equal concerns about the long term storage of the spent fuel at that facility and the limitation of storage capacity if movement of spent fuel to a central repository or storage site is not achieved in the near future.

2 [There does not appear to be any scientific reason not to make the decision to move forward with the project and use Yucca Mountain as this repository site. Decentralized, long term, storage at up to 72 commercial sites and 5 DOE sites presents an unacceptable risk and cost as compared to the Yucca Mountain Project. The credible and conservative scientific data evidenced in the draft EIS fully support moving forward.]

You have seen first hand the support of our community for the DOE and SRS. Your decision to move forward with the Yucca Mountain Project will ensure continued and long-standing support of your Department.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our comments on the Yucca Mountain Draft EIS.

Sincerely,

  
James F. West  
President, CEO  
Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce

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